The Westmacott trophy was sailed over the weekend of 12/13 September coinciding with one of the higher Spring tides of the year (the staging was flooded in places at lunchtime). A total of 10 boats entered over the two days but only 8 boats were out on Saturday, reduced to 6 on Sunday due to the absence of several regular crew. The very strong tides kept the fleet close on both days although distances yoyoed between the up and down tide legs.

Race 1 started in the Itchenor reach pretty much on the Gallon line with Freddie Brooks as the windward mark and over 30 minutes away, despite the 12 to 13 knot breeze. The fleet was initially led by Joy – just returned to the water and minus a working depth sounder - and Molly. Molly, still suffering a touch of ptsd from the previous weekend's grounding in the Stocker Lake, turned right near Lowles to nervously cross the shallows south of Thorney Island. Braver souls such as Argosy and Sky (recovering from a slow start), turned in further north. Joy meanwhile headed south for the East Head shore and the tidal relief and possible back-eddy benefits of that route. The wind varied enough to allow a bit of benefit from the shifts but this was very much a tide influenced leg. Round FB and a spinnaker leg to Ellanore followed by another beat to Gardner, this time with the whole fleet taking the EH shore, followed by a finish at East Head. The finish order after over 1.5 hrs sailing was Sky, Joy and Argosy.

A quick turn-round by the PRO (many thanks to Ryan for stepping in) and then a shorter race with Gardner as the first mark saw the fleet again taking the EH route up-tide. Sailing along the EH shore Molly's mast collapsed when the port shroud gave way, ending her part in the race. Meanwhile Sky and Serendipity were vying for the lead down to Thorney then back up to John Davis where Serendipity led (just) round the buoy. Holly had in the meantime closed the gap to the front two and the three boats had a close run back to the Gallon line via EH and Park. After the first two days of the four-race series Sky held a 2 point lead over Serendipity with Joy a further point behind. Holly, sailed by a younger Jones team of Neil and Isy, with Henry joining on Sunday, lay fourth on equal points with Argosy.

Rain was forecast for Sunday morning but despite a grey sky, decided not to materialize. BV under John Tremlett's control was positioned beyond the Cambermet post and John set a beat up to Freddie Brooks with a run to Ellanore for the first legs of Race 1. With the start line positioned on the west side of the reach the fleet quickly made for the tidal relief over the Pilsey sands near Lowles. Sky, Serendipity and Maisy headed south for the EH shore and rounded FB ahead of the boats that had sailed over the sands. A starboard pole run down to Ellanore just avoided the need for a gybe then it was up to Gardener via EH shore, back to Ellanore and then a leg up the east shore before tacking across tide for the finish – a worrying experience for the helms as the strong tide running almost beam on to the boats created a very headed and reduced strength apparent wind. Sky crossed first followed by Serendipity then Holly.

The second race followed a similar pattern to the first, but with the start line projecting into a tidal stream that increased along its length towards the pin. The fleet was bunched at the boat end and early, and an amount of sorting out was required before settling down on the beat to Gardner. A similar path towards the Pilsey sands then south to EH tacking along the edge of the beach then up to the mark. A run down to Ellanore which benefited from a gybe towards its latter end, a beat to Lowles – well overstood by the leading boats - then a run to Peacock, round and across the channel to the ledge on the Thorney side, around Astra then home via Peacock and Park. Slight confusion at Park, where it had been decided to have the finish to avoid having to race through the junior fleets in the Itchenor Reach, but all resolved without incident, with Sky taking first place followed by Maisy then Holly. Congratulations to the overall-podium-placed Sky, Serendipity and Holly.